

IN HONOR OF FAUSTINO "MANG
PEPING" BACLIG

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an American hero, Faustino "Mang Peping" Baclig, who passed away Sunday, February 27, 2011. Family and friends will be gathering for a memorial service on March 4 in Los Angeles to honor his long and full life, which was marked by heroism, dedicated community service, and incredible friendships. We are comforted knowing that today he rests in peace.

Faustino Baclig was born in the Philippines on February 14, 1922 to Irene Imperio Baclig and Fermin Gonzales Baclig. Known as Cabugao's town scholar, he completed his primary schooling in four years, skipped two grades and went on to study law at Lyceum of the Philippines University. He also received his Bachelor of Science in Political Science at the University of the Philippines and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the Philippine College of Arts and Trade. After finishing his education by age 17, he began his military career at Camp John Hay in Baguio City, Philippines.

In 1941, by military order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, all members of the Commonwealth Army of the Philippines were inducted into the United States military. Faustino Baclig was among those who served and fought heroically under the American flag in World War II. He survived the Death March of Bataan in 1942, the 61 mile forced trek where 75,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war suffered inhumanities and only 54,000 reached their destination alive.

After World War II and the liberation of the Philippines, Faustino Baclig met the love of his life, Francisca, and they married in 1952. They were blessed with two children, Frejie Maria and Filomin "Omi" Antonio. In the Philippines, Faustino Baclig enjoyed a successful career as a college professor, vice president of Provident Memorial Life Plans and as a principal in the family business.

In 1986, at the age of 64, Faustino, known to all as Mang Peping for the respect and honor he had earned, immigrated to the United States with his family. Soon after, he took the United States Oath of Allegiance and became a U.S. citizen. He spent his later years advocating for the issues that he most cherished and volunteered in the community. Mang Peping served as a commissioner on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' Adult Day Health Care Planning Council, co-founded the Golden Agers of Los Angeles, and served as a board member for People's Core, a local community organizing agency. He also was a member of the Filipino American Service Group (FASGI) and Fil-Am Vote.

In 1993, Mang Peping began a historic journey for Filipino veteran justice in 1993, when he convened the first Southern California Veterans Conference. This important meeting brought together hundreds of Filipino veterans to advocate for recognition, justice and equity for those who fought bravely alongside American soldiers in World War II. For while Mang Peping and Filipino soldiers had sworn allegiance to the United States flag and helped

America defeat the Axis powers in 1945, the U.S. Congress committed an enormous injustice one year later when it passed the Rescission Act of 1946. This act intentionally stripped Filipino veterans of the benefit they had earned as soldiers fighting under General Douglas MacArthur.

This is how I was first introduced to Mang Peping. He personally took on the struggle for justice for all Filipino veterans and became an inspiration for my work in the House of Representatives for Filipino veteran equity. Our country owes an invaluable debt of gratitude to veterans like Mang Peping who risked their lives on battlefields throughout this world to protect the basic freedoms that Americans enjoy today. At its very core, the exclusion and discrimination against Filipino veterans by the Rescission Act of 1946 was a supreme injustice.

In 2009, after more than 60 years of waiting, the Filipino Veteran Equity Compensation Fund became law. Filipino veterans finally received compensation for their courageous service during World War II. Because of the heroic work of individuals like Mang Peping, Filipino veterans not only received just compensation but the overdue recognition for their contributions to America's stand for freedom and democracy.

I have never been more certain about anything as this: Mang Peping's leadership and his fighting spirit will never be forgotten. Our deepest sympathies are extended to his loving wife Francisca; children, Frejie and Filomin "Omi" and their families, on the passing of their champion for dignity and humanity.

Mr. Speaker, it is with deep affection and heartfelt sorrow, yet with great pride and abundant admiration that I ask my colleagues to join me today in saluting Faustino "Mang Peping" Baclig, an American hero and a man I was honored to call my friend. May he rest in peace.

**OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL
DEBT**

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today our national debt is \$14,178,525,108,267.60.

On January 6th, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$3,540,099,361,973.80 since then.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
EXTENSION ACT OF 2011**

SPEECH OF

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 662—The Sur-

face Transportation Extension Act of 2011. This bill provides much needed funding to keep the transportation projects in our nation going and provides assurance to State Departments of Transportation that vital infrastructure projects can continue without delay. Additionally, this bill buys the House time to put together a comprehensive, longer term surface transportation bill that can adequately address the needs and challenges facing this nation.

I look forward to working on a new surface transportation bill with Highways and Transit Subcommittee Chairman DUNCAN and with Chairman MICA's leadership along with our colleagues on the full Committee.

I am confident that our Committee will put together a bill that will meet the serious challenges we face in maintaining and improving our infrastructure. I am also confident that we will have the appropriate focus on what we must do to help move our economy forward and the elimination of earmarks will allow us to develop strong legislation that focuses more on need instead of narrow interests.

Throughout history economic growth has followed our transportation grid. Whether it was sea routes, canals, wagon trains, rail, roads and airlinks, growth in our economy has always been dependent on our transportation infrastructure.

I believe this will help to ensure that the most needed projects get funding and help to eliminate any unnecessary projects.

Madam Speaker, it is critical that we make sure that spending stays in line with revenues, and one way in which to do this is to prevent the use of "donor states," or states that give more to the Highway Trust Fund than they receive. My home state of Michigan is such a donor state, and we and other donor states have for too long been at the short end of funding for projects.

My state of Michigan has been ground zero for this difficult economy. We have had among the highest unemployment rates for many years and it is simply unacceptable that hard-working Michigan taxpayers are asked to subsidize transportation funding for states that have not been nearly as hard hit.

This extension is our first step in the process and I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation so that we can continue our important work to develop the best transportation network in the world.

**HONORING CONSTANCE H. LAU AS
A RECIPIENT OF THE 2011 WOMEN'S
COUNCIL ON ENERGY AND
THE ENVIRONMENT WOMAN OF
THE YEAR AWARD**

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Constance Lau for being recognized as the 2011 Woman of the Year by the Women's Council on Energy and the Environment.

As President and CEO of Hawaiian Electric Industries, Hawaii's largest public company, and Chairman of the Board of Hawaii Electric Company (which serves 95 percent of the state), Connie Lau has played a critical role in helping Hawaii—the most oil-dependent state